

NIFC News

National Interagency Fire Center
3833 S. Development Ave.
Boise, ID 83705



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Contact: Randy Eardley, 387-5895
Rose Davis, 387-5437

More Australian, New Zealand and Canadian Wildfire Specialists

Arriving to Assist U.S. Efforts

(Boise, Idaho) – Nearly 44 more fire specialists from Australia and New Zealand will arrive at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise today, to prepare for fire assignments throughout the Northwest and Rocky Mountain areas. There are currently 48 firefighters from the two countries deployed primarily in the northwest. The Australian and New Zealand specialists will receive two days of orientation beginning Saturday, and assigned to fires the first of next week.

Four more Type 1 Canadian firefighting crews (80 people) will be arriving in Kalispell, Montana on Saturday for orientation and begin working on fires in the northern Rockies as soon as Monday. Six Type 1 crews are already on the job throughout Nevada, Utah and Idaho. An additional 20 mid-level managers and aviation specialists also from British Columbia and Saskatchewan will add to the 39 Canadians already working in the United States. Twelve Canadian smokjumper have been working out of the Missoula, Montana Smokejumper Base for two weeks.

The fire specialists from the three countries are helicopter managers and mid-level managers with supervisory qualifications including strike team and task force leaders. Liaison officers from the three countries are also working at the Geographic Coordination Centers in Portland and Missoula and assisting with planning at NIFC.

“We’ve been training more crews in the U.S.,” said Brian McManus, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Director at NIFC, “but we need these skilled supervisors to keep them safe and working at a high level of efficiency. The Canadians especially often work in very rugged country and, like the Australians and New Zealanders, are highly trained and qualified to our interagency standards and understand the structure of the Incident Command System.”

Primary federal and state firefighting resources continue to perform well during this long and active fire year. Waves of hot temperatures, dry fuel conditions, and intermittent lightning storms continue to create many new fire starts and hamper large fire suppression in most western states.
